



## Place of the National Library

CURRENT Concepts of the Place of  
the National Library in National Life  
and Policy and of Its Duty to the Na-  
tion's People.

### *The British Museum*

It is by no means easy to give a direct answer on this point. The position of the great general national library vis a vis the many new libraries and new types of library and information centers created during the last 20 years is at present being worked out, and it is too soon, as yet, to say how this relationship will ultimately be developed.

There has been a great change in the concept of national work in the last few years, and the idea of one center which should contain the main collections on every subject has been very substantially modified. The reasons for this are:

1. The most articulate and dominating section of library users tends at the present time to be scientific and technological rather than humanistic; the last class, the most assiduous, and in many ways the greatest users of library material, need to use a national library as their research laboratory and are happy to see in it as comprehensive a collection of works bearing on their own subjects as possible, whereas the other group has no interest in the libraries as such but desire to use them for specific pieces of information.

2. The demands for information may be so detailed and may require so speedy and individual a service that they cannot be met by a large, and possibly, therefore, cumbersome general library.

3. The search for material and its transmission has very often to be done without its being asked for, again a service outside the scope of the large general library.

4. The employment of expert staff versed in the literature of individual and often very small subjects is not possible for the large general library.

5. There is a demand for library information service locally rather than at a remote center.

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On the other hand, many of the traditional functions of the national library continue to be as important as ever: it is usually the depository for all the national literature. It has funds and staff for the purchase of representative literature of value from all parts of the world; it has capacity for large storage and can undertake to preserve its material indefinitely; it covers the subjects which are neglected by all the specialist ad hoc libraries; it has great historical collections as well as current ones and permits the reader to place books on widely different subjects side by side for study and comparison; it has the standing and authority which enable it to withstand changes of fashion and variations in public interest; it has the authority to bring about coordination and cooperation where this is needed; it is usually the one library which has a statutory duty to maintain its collections indefinitely for the public advantage and the public service.

It seems certain that the national library must continue as at present, and must maintain the width and depth of its acquisitions policy and the authority of its collections. It is equally true, however, that it should feel itself to be supported at various levels by the local public libraries for recreational reading and instruction and first stage research; by research and special libraries for detailed work on technical and highly specialized subjects and by a carefully thought out scheme of interlibrary lending and cooperation. The tendency to regard certain subjects as outside its competence to deal with, usually scientific and technical subjects, should be checked and special sections of the library to deal with these subjects created and staffed with fully qualified persons. The staff of such sections as find it necessary to offer a quick and detailed reference service should be equipped to do so, but this development should be coordinated as carefully as possible with existing services both local and special. Collaboration between these various bodies can be mutually advantageous and should be designed towards this end.

Unfortunately, older national libraries, which have grown up under different circumstances from the present, can only realize such changes after a considerable period or when some exceptional opportunity, e.g. the transfer to new quarters, arises, hence the present somewhat transitional period and the apparent tardiness with which some of the national libraries have responded to the vociferous requests for more elaborate service from many quarters.

It is equally clear that all forms of rigidity in library organization should be avoided, because any such rigidity tends to interfere with the library service and creates dissatisfaction among the users.

*The National Library of Wales*

A principal aim is to maintain a close contact between the Library and the people of Wales, not only scholars and research workers but the ordinary people as well, because it is only thus that it is possible to encourage Welsh men and women to send material for safe keeping to the Library rather than destroy it. With this end in view lectures on the Library and its work have been delivered at various centers throughout the country. Exhibitions of books are periodically arranged in the Library and these are sometimes loaned to municipal and other libraries. Three exhibitions of paintings were held during the summer and these attracted a large number of visitors. The Library has held exhibitions of contemporary Irish, Scottish, English, as well as of Welsh art in its gallery. Parties, especially of school children, are encouraged to visit the Library and are shown around the various departments. Books are supplied to sanatoria throughout the country.

*Leabharlann Naisiunta na hÉireann* (National Library of Ireland)

The national library of a country has two main functions. It must collect, preserve, and make available all the recorded information relating to the country for the use of its own nationals and inquirers elsewhere. It must also collect and make available a selection from the information recorded on all subjects in other countries which is likely to prove of interest or value to its own nationals.

A national library does not exist to collect books or manuscripts. It collects books and manuscripts because they record information. Recorded information may also be on clay tablets, on microfilm or motion picture films, on magnetic tape, on photographs, and in various other forms. All these kinds of recorded information are, therefore, within the scope of a national library.

The recorded information is collected to be used by this and by succeeding generations. It must therefore be preserved, and at the same time be made available to those who wish to use it. In so far as a national library deals with the recorded information of its own country there is no limit in strict theory imposed on the collecting by the triviality or ephemeral nature of the material collected. Such limits are imposed when it makes the selection from the material of other countries. No limits should be imposed on those of its citizens who may wish to use its facilities other than that they should come to seek information, not merely to read for recreation.

These guiding principles should determine the general scope and

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functions of a national library and its selection of material, its system of cataloging, its rules as to admission of readers, its relations with other libraries and archives both in the country and outside it. All its administrative and policy decisions should be based on these principles.

While a national library has the duty to discharge these two functions, it can only do so by cooperating with the other libraries and archives in the country. This is necessary because much of the recorded information relating to the country will be in other libraries and archives and in private custody and also because the task would be impossibly expensive if attempted by one institution alone. Specialist libraries can help to carry the burden of the national library in many fields especially in the sciences. When these principles are put into practice the national library becomes to some extent part of a network of cooperating libraries and institutions which are sharing its tasks, the national library being the central and main force in collecting recorded information on non-national specialist fields which are not adequately covered by other institutions.

From this it follows that the national library must know what fields of information are covered by other libraries and archives and to what extent the information in these institutions is available to those who may wish to use it. This makes the national library the obvious center for union catalogs and the center from which the voluntary cooperation of other libraries and archives in the acquisition of new material should be coordinated. There is, as a corollary, the further duty of copying where possible on microfilm or otherwise all recorded information relating to the country which is not accessible to those who need it, either because it is in private custody or in a foreign library or archives, or in a library at home which has no prospect of being able to catalog it, or cannot make it readily available.

While the general principles are the same in all countries, it is clear that in very large countries, the degree to which the national library must depend on other institutions to help it to fulfill with them the over-all task will be very much greater than in smaller countries.

In the primary task of collecting national recorded information, the national library should assist the library of a smaller state within the state or of a province or county within the state to build up a local collection for the local division on the same lines as the national library does for the whole country so that the sum of all these local collections form where they are unique a contribution to, and where they are not unique a duplication of the collected information in the

national library. There must be, of course, a flow and return of bibliographical exchange of information between these local collections and the central collection if the interests of both are to be promoted. As has been already pointed out, the national library as the central source of information must be able to guide inquirers to the local source when the information there is unique as is generally the case with manuscript as distinct from printed collections.

*Osterreichische Nationalbibliothek, Austria*

In almost every country there is a library which is distinguished beyond all other libraries and is designated as a national library, even when not so named. The origins of a national library may differ. Often it had once been the library on a prince's estate which had gradually assumed the function of a national library; in other cases it was founded for its national purpose. The most important duties of a national library may be stated as follows:

1. The maintenance of a comprehensive collection of national writings, acquired as far as possible through copyright deposit either as required by law or by the voluntary gift of their authors.
2. The issuance of a national bibliography which contains all the literature written either about a country or by the nationals of a country.
3. The administration of international interlibrary loans.
4. The training of librarians in an affiliated library school.
5. The publication of catalogs (general, special, serial, etc.).
6. The printing of catalog cards for other libraries of the country.
7. The compilation of bibliographies of reference value, the preparation of indices, and the maintenance of a national union catalog.
8. The organization of international book exchange channels.
9. The public utilization of duplicates.
10. The development of technical standards for other libraries in the country, including binding, printing, restoration, photoduplication, and microfilm reproduction.
11. The collection of such specialized material as manuscripts, incunables, books for the blind, dramatic compositions, engravings, medals, music scores, cinematic films, photographs, sound recordings, and coins; unless these materials are already collected in other institutions or museums.

These responsibilities, as enumerated above, give only a microscopic picture of the role of the national library in national life. A national

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library does not necessarily have to assume all of them, neither must it be the largest library in the country, nor be the resort of the greatest number of readers, but it must fulfill a special social function in the country and symbolize outstanding library service.

#### *Bibliothèque Nationale, France*

The Bibliothèque Nationale is the custodian of an important part of the intellectual patrimony of the nation, established by the entire production of the French press, books, periodicals, prints, posters, catalogs, and musical scores, which are sent to the library because it is the legally established depository, and by its precious collections of manuscripts, incunables, rare books, and bindings which are acquired by gift, bequest or purchase.

By reason of the encyclopedic character which marked the collections during preceding centuries, the Bibliothèque Nationale has taken care to develop its resources in all the branches of knowledge, at least in those which are concerned with works of synthesis and general culture. In the field of the social sciences, and primarily in literature and history, the library strives to acquire all foreign reference works and studies, but, in the domain of pure and applied science and technology it now directs the seekers to special libraries or to documentation centers.

The major duty of conserving the nation's intellectual patrimony, which devolves upon the Bibliothèque Nationale, prohibits it from admitting the general public. Its role is that of a scholarly library, reserved for those workers whose researches possess an interest for culture. This duty is also the reason why the Bibliothèque Nationale cannot be a lending library. However, since the city of Paris does not provide a large library of general culture, accessible to everyone, the Bibliothèque Nationale seeks to admit for a limited period, readers who cannot be satisfied upon a specific point from the resources of the municipal public libraries.

At the same time, the richness of its French collections makes the Bibliothèque Nationale a peerless bibliographic center for national bibliography (see page 65) whether it be in the realm of the history of the book in manuscript or print, of the graphic arts, of cartography, of numismatics, or of musicology (see page 12). At the heart of the Bibliothèque Nationale centers of learned research have been established which play a national part, even sometimes extending to international cooperation.

The great French center for research in literature and modern his-

tory is naturally the department of printed books, by reason of the abundance of its literary series, and the properly historic character of certain of its collections. But also, around it, in all sectors of the Library, centers of specialized research are developing, workshops of research wherein beyond the usual tasks of classification, cataloging, and service, all sorts of scientific works are prepared.

For example, the national center for the history of the book is the *Réserve* of printed books, thanks to the richness of its collections, and to the works of investigation and bibliographic research which are there executed, both on the ancient and on the modern book. The national Committee on the French Illustrated Book has its headquarters there.

The national center of studies of the literature and history of the Middle Ages is the manuscript room, because of its collection of ancient French manuscripts; it is also the center of studies of medieval painting, due to its collection of illuminated manuscripts, beside which the treasures at the Arsenal must also be cited. Again, its rich collections of oriental printed books and manuscripts and the scholarly apparatus developed for their use make the oriental section of the manuscript room of the Bibliothèque Nationale one of the centers of orientalism in Paris.

One of the centers of geographical studies in France is the department of maps and plans which extends beyond territorial limits, since it was here that the *Bibliographies Cartographique Internationale* was worked out, starting from the year 1946, and enlarging the *Bibliographie Cartographique Française* established during the war. Here are gathered the elements of an international catalog of ancient maps, as well as working instruments valuable to cartographic science.

The headquarters of the Association Internationale des Bibliothèques Musicales are in the Department of Music; the varied tasks of that Association, founded in 1951 (development of cataloging rules, the preparation of specialized international indices, etc.) tend in every way to facilitate the work of musicologists and musicians. Also, the center of French numismatic studies is the Cabinet des Médailles. Its staff, trained in the science, play an active role in national and international projects, in various commissions and societies in particular, in the Société Française de Numismatique, which since 1945 has had its library and headquarters in the library's Cabinet des Médailles. They also assist in teaching numismatics through courses in the École du Louvre and in the École des Hautes Études, as well as holding conferences. Other activities of the Cabinet des Médailles

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include work in the scientific analysis of coins, and extend to the inventorying of provincial collections and to the examination of monetary discoveries made on French territory.

It can be said that the French museum of engraving is the Cabinet des Estampes, which, in its own workroom, organizes small and constantly changing exhibitions; in the Mansart gallery, mounts exhibits of engravings of large dimensions, and, further, provides enthusiasts of iconography with numerous exhibitions thus extending its service to a very large public; it is the headquarters of the Comité Nationale de la Gravure Française; its curators play an active role in teaching the history of engraving, e.g. at the École du Louvre. It is one of the great French centers of pictorial documentation, and takes an important part in the work of the Comité de Coordination de la Documentation par l'Image.

Finally, the exhibitions of the Library, exhibitions of varied character, in which all departments are called upon to participate, quicken opinion and place within public reach, in a pleasant and facile manner, some of the results of the learned work which is pursued in the above-mentioned centers. Also, the Bibliothèque Nationale is not infrequently opened to cultural groups for general tours of its departments.

A detailed account of the progress, status, and activity of France's national library in the years immediately following World War II is given in a full report covering the years 1945-1951 presented to the Minister of Education rendered by the administrator-general of the Bibliothèque Nationale.<sup>1</sup>

### *Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence*

This National Central Library, like the National Library in Rome, discharges the following duties:

1. To collect and preserve in order everything which is published in Italy and which is received through the operations of the copyright law.
2. To enrich the literary and scientific activities by making fully available the history of Italian thought.
3. To acquire important foreign works which treat of the history and the scientific, literary, and artistic achievements of Italy.
4. To represent foreign culture in the collections to the widest extent possible.



*Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Rome*

The Biblioteca Nazionale collects all Italian publications, both those that are acquired by copyright deposit and those that appear abroad. Foreign works are selected on the basis of the disciplines represented, with especial emphasis on the humanities. In addition, an effort is made to secure foreign materials which relate in any way to Italy. A special division of general culture was created in 1930, for which new books attractive to the less educated public and to younger readers are chosen.

*Bibliothèque Nationale, Luxembourg*

The character of the Bibliothèque Nationale entitles it to perform an official mission comparable to, and identical with, other national libraries. It is the only great scientific library in the Grand Duchy and its primary duties are two-fold:

1. It must place at the disposal of its readers a considerable selection of the literary and scientific production of the world.
2. It must collect and treasure all Luxemburgensia (both the imprints of the Grand Duchy and foreign works relating to the nation).

During World War II the collections of the former Bibliothèque Pédagogique and the Bibliothèque Professionnelle were added to the collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale. This enlargement of resources has led to an expanded acquisitions program.

*Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Netherlands*

There is not, in the Netherlands, a national library in the sense of either a library aiming to have as full a collection as possible of Dutch manuscripts and printed books, or a library aiming to have a full and representative collection in every field of human knowledge.

This is a result of the smallness of the country and its linguistic area. There is no law of copyright since, besides bringing in the chaff with the corn, this would only supply a fraction of the reading requirements of the Dutch library public, and the concentration in Western Holland of general and specialized libraries in every field at short distances from one another, coupled with the high development of the inter-library loans system, means that the need for a national library on the above lines is not felt. If, however, the term is applied to the Library which has the central and coordinating position in the Dutch library system, it is undoubtedly the Royal Library at The Hague which

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qualifies. This Library limits itself to the humanities, as far as modern works are concerned, but it has a very valuable collection of older printed books and manuscripts, both Dutch and foreign, and it maintains the union catalogs on which the interlibrary loans system largely depends. Also, it lends its books all over the country by post. It is, however, distinctly a scholarly library: it buys no popular literature except to illustrate trends, and post-1920 fiction can only be borrowed with a special permit for research purposes.

As a result of this situation, current concepts of the place and function of the national library, so far as they are not individual and pious wishes, are largely concerned with aspects of interlibrary cooperation (see page 90). The central position of the Royal Library is also illustrated by the following facts: (1) The Netherlands International Exchange Bureau forms a department of the Library. (2) The Library becomes more and more a documentation center for the ministries and other government bureaus in The Hague. (3) A special department of the Library is the Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum, the director of which is the royal librarian. The main collections of this Museum are manuscripts and incunabula and it is now going to be transformed into a national book museum, which gives the Royal Library an opportunity to organize alternating exhibitions of its own treasures in the fields of manuscripts, bindings, illustrated books, modern typography, etc. (4) The royal librarian is at the same time director of a recently established museum and documentation center of Dutch literature in The Hague, which as a museum specializes in the field of manuscripts and letters of modern Dutch authors and as a documentation center publishes bibliographies on cards. (5) The royal librarian is the chairman of the Rijkscommissie van Advies in zake het Bibliotheekwezen (State Advisory Committee on Librarianship).

#### *Kungl. Biblioteket, Sweden*

The Stockholm Royal Library<sup>2</sup> which is an independent government institution under the Ministry of Education has two main functions:

1. It is the national library of Sweden. As such it endeavors to collect all materials printed in Sweden as well as all publications appearing abroad that are of Swedish interest. Complete coverage of the Swedish language publications of Finland and the Swedish groups in America is sought. Since the 17th century the Library has received by legal deposit from the printers a copy of every publication printed

in Sweden, including newspapers, pamphlets, maps, etc. It should be noted, however, that the privilege of legal deposit is also enjoyed by the university libraries of Uppsala, Lund and Göteborg, and recently, through the intermediary of the Ministry of Justice, by the new research library for North Sweden in Umeå, although traditionally these libraries do not emphasize the Swedish collection to the same extent as the Royal Library.

Another function of national scope handled by the Royal Library is the compilation of the Swedish National Bibliography (*Svensk Bokförteckning*) and the Annual Union Catalog. The director of the Royal Library exercises a certain measure of supervision over the major provincial libraries and is regularly consulted by the government in matters affecting the development of the national library system. Although not an exchange bureau in the continental sense of the word, the Library handles the distribution to other Swedish libraries of incoming exchange shipments from foreign centers, including the International Exchange Service at Smithsonian Institution.

2. The Royal Library is the capital's principal research and reference library in the humanities, the theological and social sciences, and in certain branches of law. Under an agreement with the University of Stockholm in December, 1953, it is acting as the main library of the University in the fields listed above, at the graduate and faculty level.

#### *Schweizerische Landesbibliothek, Switzerland*

In a federative country like Switzerland, where cultural affairs belong strictly to the cantons, and where a sufficient number of cantonal and communal libraries are already catering to the particular needs of their population, according to their language, creed and other characteristics, there is neither the need for, nor the possibility of, a general national library. What is wanted is a library where one can study, without traveling from library to library, every aspect of the national life. The Schweizerische Landesbibliothek has, therefore, been given the assignment to be as complete as possible in its holdings of Helvetica, collecting foreign publications only if they are of interest to the country by reason of their authors or their contents. Its collections thus form the basis of national bibliographies, whether general, as in the case of the *Livre Suisse*, or special, as in the case of *Bibliographia Scientiae Naturalis Helvetica* and others. It is one of the outstanding duties to publish such bibliographies within the limits of the material possibilities, and of course in consideration of the real needs of the country. Moreover, any question asked on the spot, or by letter or

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telephone is answered without charge, very often in the form of rather extensive bibliographies. The Library has thus become a most important national bibliographic center, supplying information all over the country to everyone who needs it, without distinction. This service has considerably extended since the war, as obviously more and more people, and especially research workers, have shifted over to the Library the bibliographical part of their work which formerly they used to perform for themselves. In addition, books are sent free of charge to every applicant over fifteen years of age.

#### *Millî Kütüphane, Ankara*

Founded in 1948, the Millî Kütüphane seeks (1) to help and encourage research in all fields; (2) to act in a general way as a center of culture in a place where all spiritual matters are promoted; (3) to assemble and prepare for use all Turkish publications; (4) to gather the most important foreign works useful to Turkish scholars; and (5) to preserve for future generations the literature of Turkey.

#### *The Jewish National and University Library, Israel*

The history of the Jewish National and University Library has brought about a unique situation with respect to the theoretical basis of its functions and policies. It was founded in 1892 by the B'nai B'rith Lodge of Jerusalem. In 1920, the World Zionist Organization assumed responsibility for constituting this library as one for the Jewish people as a whole. With the establishment of the Hebrew University in 1925, the library was placed under its auspices and supported by its funds, fulfilling a three-fold function: (1) it was the library that gathered together all material concerning Jewish life, history, and literature as a central collection for the Jewish people; (2) the library of the Hebrew University; and (3) the library of the population of Palestine.

When the State of Israel was established in 1948 the third function was transformed into that of serving as a central national library of the new state, with this distinction from most national libraries, that it is not a governmental institution. It is financed by the Hebrew University which, in turn, receives part of its support from the Jewish Agency and part from private contributions. Literature in all branches of public administration and social science has had to be provided and publications in various fields have been required to assist the many development projects, and to solve the special problems created by large numbers of new immigrants of various backgrounds.

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Among its over 800,000 volumes the Jewish National and University Library possesses one of the largest collections of Judaica and Hebraica in the world. Great efforts have been made in the last few years to salvage and to bring to Israel remnants, in hundreds of thousands, of Jewish books in Europe. The Jewish National and University Library is performing an important national duty by acting as trustee, central depot, and distributing agent for these salvaged volumes. The Library has had also to develop new departments in conjunction with four new university faculties established in the last five years: medicine, law, the social sciences, and agriculture.

### *The National Diet Library, Japan*

The National Diet Library is the only national library, established in accordance with the National Diet Library Law, which regulates the place occupied by the library in national life and its duty to the people. According to the Law, the primary duty of the Library is to perform the following three library services: to the Diet, to the executive and judicial branches of the government, and to the general public.

As to the third function, the Law provides that insofar as its primary duty to the Diet and to the executive and judicial branches permit, service to the general public shall be rendered to the fullest extent possible. Thus the collections are made available for use and study either in the building, or through interlibrary loan, or by reproduction and transcription, or by exhibits; subject to rules and regulations made by the chief librarian, who is directed also to provide such other services as he may, according to circumstances, find necessary to the improvement of the library system and its development generally.

By all appropriate means, prefectural and other local assemblies, government officials and librarians elsewhere are assisted in the organization of libraries and in the extension of library service. Printed catalog cards and other publications are made available to libraries and individuals at prices fixed by the chief librarian. Plans are being formulated for the establishment of a union catalog of the library resources of Japan, and for such other catalogs and lists as may be necessary to ensure the coordinated usefulness of Japanese libraries.

In order to discharge its responsibilities the National Diet Library is conducting twenty-six branch libraries in the executive and judicial branches of the government, and four branch libraries under its direct administration including the Ueno Library, which had been popular among the people as the former national library, and the Seikado

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Bunko, the Toyo Bunko, and the Okurayama Cultural Science Library, famous for their special collections.

#### *The General Assembly Library, New Zealand*

The question of the functions of a national library in New Zealand has been a live issue during the past two or three years. The New Zealand Library Association has a committee which has been investigating the problem. The interest has been stimulated chiefly by the lack of proper accommodation of two of the three libraries which will have to be eventually integrated to form the new national library.

It might be as well to explain here that the three libraries are: the General Assembly Library, the oldest and the library of Parliament; the Alexander Turnbull Library, the nucleus of which was given to the New Zealand people by Turnbull in 1918, and the National Library Service which is chiefly interested in the lending functions of a national library, though it acts as a coordinating body for much bibliographical work.

Various articles have appeared recently in *New Zealand Libraries* on the subject particularly those by Stuart Perry,<sup>3</sup> W. S. Wauchop<sup>4</sup> and J. D. Wilson.<sup>5</sup> Recently the New Zealand Library Association through its President H. W. Bacon<sup>6</sup> has written to the Prime Minister as follows in part:

1. Elements of a national library exist in the stock and services now provided by the three Wellington state libraries, the General Assembly Library, the Alexander Turnbull Library and the National Library Service.

2. The most obvious need is for a national library building in which all or a major part of these existing collections can be housed adequately and safely and the necessary services performed efficiently.

3. To this end the immediate setting aside of a suitable centrally situated site for the erection of such a building is considered a matter of urgency.

4. While detailed proposals regarding the extent to which the existing state libraries would be included and their consequential administrative relationship are naturally not now possible, there are some obvious comments on their present housing needs which bear specifically on the need for such a building.

5. A Prime Minister's Consultative Committee representative of such bodies as the Departments at present administratively responsible for the three state libraries, the New Zealand Library Association and the University of New Zealand should be appointed to make recommendations on specific aspects of the problem.

While . . . we have in New Zealand no national library, many of the functions of such are being performed by the three existing state libraries. . . .

That our national library needs are being met in part serves only to highlight the unsatisfactory accommodation situation of two of the three institutions concerned. In the case of the Alexander Turnbull Library and the National Library Service, the present urgent need for relief is such that it can scarcely await the erection of a national library building in the indeterminate future.

In the case of the Alexander Turnbull Library it is well known that the planned strengthening and reconstruction of the existing building will not permit the satisfactory housing even of the existing collections which amount to about 125,000 volumes. It is understood that no provision at all has so far been made for growth. Staff working conditions, now unsafe, must always be unsatisfactory. Therefore, whatever short term provision is made to meet this situation, it would appear to be a logical provision to make a realistic allowance in a national library building for accommodation for this collection.

The National Library Service is committed more deeply to the provision of national lending and bibliographical services than are the other two libraries. Its headquarters are two condemned houses in Sydney Street East. The School Library Service division and additional storage for the headquarters collection occupy four other points within the city. Except for the safety factor, working conditions are even poorer than in the Alexander Turnbull Library. The total stock of the Service, apart from the School Division, amounts to over 400,000 volumes of which approximately 100,000 are housed in Wellington under shocking conditions. There is no possible provision for expansion, and to meet the situation costly and inefficient expedients of storing or shelving stock elsewhere in the city or in other centres have to be resorted to.

The General Assembly Library, as the oldest of the three, and the library of Parliament, has the strongest commitments to its present site and organization. It is also the most fortunate so far as accommodation is concerned. . . . Nevertheless, at the time when the national library building is being planned the extent to which the General Assembly Library could be included would need careful study. The library has a collection of approximately 225,000 volumes.

In planning a suitable building, . . . full provision should be made for the inclusion of the Dominion Archives. Whether the Archives should form an administrative part of the National Library or should remain separate is a point for further consideration, but the building itself should be planned to include them. . . .

The rate of library growth is a problem which has caused much research and concern in various parts of the world. . . . It would be

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reasonable to expect an immediate transfer to the national library building of 500,000 volumes and to allow therefore in its construction for the housing of 1,000,000 books, with provision for later additions to the building as necessary.

#### *Bibliothèque Générale de Tunisia*

The Bibliothèque Générale plays the role of national library in Tunisia, in the sense that its function, personnel, and resources derive from the Direction of Public Instruction, the head of which holds ministerial rank in the government, and because it is the only legal deposit in Tunisia for all Arabic or French publications issued in the country. Moreover, it takes the part of a central lending library, sending books to the interior of the nation and to libraries abroad upon request.

The library contains 250,000 volumes, of which 35,000 are printed in oriental, predominantly Arabic languages, and 3,500 oriental manuscripts. There are two reading rooms and a loan service.

#### *Biblioteca Nacional, Argentina*

The Biblioteca Nacional is the most important of all the country's libraries by reason of its age, the size of its collections, and the number of its readers.

#### *Biblioteca Nacional, Cuba*

The Biblioteca Nacional occupies a distinguished place in national life, contributing to the enlargement of the general culture of the citizenry through furnishing the necessary books.

#### *Biblioteca Nacional, Guatemala*

The establishment of a national library was one of the most pressing needs of the country, since the cultural institutions through which the lower classes could increase their knowledge were restricted to the Universidad Pontificia de San Carlos Borromeo, and in the monasteries, as well as in the important library in the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País. It was therefore one of the objectives of the program of the leaders of the Liberal Revolution of 1871, Granados and Barrios, to make available to working people free education provided by the state. Upon the suppression of monastic and religious orders during that revolution, their libraries and archives were transferred to the library of the university, which was nationalized.

The National Library was founded on October 18th, 1879. In it were assembled the library of the university, the library of the Amigos del



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País and the libraries of the suppressed religious houses. These were transferred to one of the rooms in the National Assembly building on April 25th, 1881, in order to improve public access. After the earthquakes of 1917-1918, which destroyed almost all of the capital city, the surviving collections of the National Library were transferred to the Engineering School of the National University, and in 1925 to the School of Law. Since 1940, a National Library and a National Archives have been under construction. But so far only the basement and parts of the first floor have been completed.

Since the fall of pro-communist President Arbenz, the number of readers has increased, probably because the present national librarian is a graduate librarian who has improved the organization of the technical services and provided a more effective distribution of personnel. The country's intellectuals are cooperating in the solution of problems. Thus, while prior to 1950, the Library's hours of opening were from 9 a.m. to 12 m., and from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., but the requirements of readers forced a change of schedule. Public service is now given from 8 a.m. to 12 m., and from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. Mondays through Fridays; on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 12 m.; on Sundays the Library is closed.

The thirty-seven state libraries depend on the National Library for their organization and bibliography. They are affiliated with workingmen's societies. The government makes them a monthly appropriation of from twenty to fifty quetzales (\$20 to \$50). The libraries of elementary, secondary, and technical schools are under the direction of the National Library. A bookmobile, purchased from the Gertenslager Company, of Wooster, Ohio, recently traveled two hundred and fifty miles through the western part of the country. In the capital, it has served the Military Hospital, the Polytechnic School, the National School of Agriculture, the Industrial Institute, and the University Press.

The Biblioteca Nacional has become a cultural center for officially sponsored programs. Lectures are delivered there by foreign and Guatemalan intellectuals.

### *Biblioteca Nacional, Peru*

The principle is accepted that whereas the primary duty of a public library is to make books accessible to the general reader, the National Library must serve a two-fold function: (1) to provide research materials to learned readers, such as university professors and distinguished scholars; and (2) at the same time to conserve the cultural heritage for the benefit of successive generations. The distinction is

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obvious, but in countries like Peru it is a theory rather than a practice, because the development of libraries and a library system are only at the initial stage. Indeed, in such countries, the national library is obliged to act also as a public library.

This leads to a conflict of purposes. It is often necessary to issue to careless readers books which, if they are damaged, can only be replaced with difficulty. In such instances the service of a public library jeopardizes the proper function of a national library. At the same time, if the national library, in order to preserve its collections, fails adequately to serve the general reader, the objective of the public library is frustrated by submission to the concept of a national library. In the Peruvian Biblioteca Nacional the collision of the two types of libraries is keenly felt. It is mitigated by trying to acquire a sufficient number of copies to meet the requests of the general public, and to reserve at least one for future use, as a sacred deposit of Peruviana.

#### *Biblioteca Nacional, El Salvador*

The Biblioteca Nacional is the most important bibliographic center in El Salvador, consequently, all cultural programs relating to books, such as celebrations, exhibitions, lectures, and the observance of book weeks, are committed to it for execution. As an agency of the Ministry of Culture, the Library's duties toward the town and the public generally are essentially those of a university insofar as intellectual activities are concerned.

#### *South African Public Library, Cape Town*

In the *Report of the Inter-departmental Committee on the libraries of the Union of South Africa, 1937*,<sup>7</sup> it was stated that

"The South African Public Library, Cape Town, and the State Library, Pretoria, are recognized as national libraries, and, besides being given copyright privileges, are subsidized by the Union Government."

The Report goes on to recommend that

"By its history, the position which it occupies amongst the libraries of the country, and its environment, the South African Public Library . . . should be pre-eminently the Reference Library of South Africa and the recognized repository of its literary treasures."

The Committee further recommended that

"To enable the State Library and the South African Public Library to discharge their duties as national libraries, they will have to be reorganized and their staffs considerably enlarged. Their activities as local lending libraries which . . . tend to swamp the energies of their

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staffs, should be administered and financed separately from those pertaining to their functions as national libraries."

To serve with reasonable efficiency as a 'Central Library' for the Union, the State Library will require a much larger income than that placed at its disposal by the Carnegie Corporation to enlarge and keep up to date its stock of specialist and other expensive books. The building in which the South African Public Library is housed, is according to modern standards, unsuitable for its purpose and compares very unfavorably, both as regards arrangement and accommodation, with library buildings erected elsewhere in the Union within recent years. For a library containing so many valuable and irreplaceable manuscripts and books, it is insufficiently protected against fire. The future of the library is to some extent bound up with that of the other libraries of the Cape. It should play a leading part in bringing about the co-ordination of the various collections which make up the great wealth of literature (over 530,000 volumes) which has accumulated in Cape Town and its vicinity. It is to be hoped that in course of time the Library of Parliament and the South African Public Library, whose activities at present partly overlap, will merge into one institution which will, like the Library of Congress, serve both Parliament and people to their mutual satisfaction. Should the municipal library service in Cape Town become free, the present independent suburban libraries should be operated as branches of the South African Public Library.

The present policy objectives of this Library have been set out in "Some Proposals for the Development of National Bibliographical Services in South Africa,"<sup>8</sup> by D. H. Varley and O. H. Spohr (in papers read at the Bloemfontein Conference, September 28, 1954. These objectives, approved by the Minister of Education, Arts and Science under whose jurisdiction this Library now falls, are summarized as follows:

It is true that we have neither the tight "bibliographical control" of a compact country such as Denmark, nor the major apparatus of older and larger countries such as Great Britain and the United States. We have, however, to summarise briefly, the following components of a national bibliographical service:

We have the elements of a *planning body* and *information centre* in the working group known so far as the Bibliographical Sub-committee, but at present it lacks official status and financial means.

We have a framework of bibliographical service on a national scale based primarily on the two national libraries and on the Councils for Scientific and Educational Research; these are State or State-aided bodies, and the amount of support they receive from the Government should be in direct relation to the tasks they set out to perform.

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We have a number of important bibliographical undertakings in progress, which have arisen through the initiative of individual libraries with the resources to carry them out. These undertakings should be welcomed, and fitted into the general framework.

Lastly, there are projects which for want of financial support and the necessary technical facilities, still represent important *lacunae* in our national bibliographical equipment. Of these perhaps the two most important are the general national bibliography of current publishing output, and the compilation of a basic union list of South African publications of the past to supplement our present imperfect record.

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